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ABSTRACT

An action research project was conducted at Ohio's Sinclair Community College to review and revise the early childhood teacher education curriculum. First, a modified Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) process was undertaken. Over 800 tasks from 8 validated task lists obtained from early childhood education (ECE) programs at other community colleges were categorized and synthesized into a DACUM chart of 133 tasks. Focus group interviews were then held with the college's ECE Program Advisory Committee, program graduates, student teaching site representatives, and representatives from community child care programs to validate the synthesized DACUM chart. Focus group participants also completed questionnaires requesting them to identify tasks that ECE graduates should be able to perform, rate the importance of the task in the profession, and determine the frequency with which the task is performed. The quantitative findings from the questionnaire and the qualitative findings from the focus groups were then analyzed and compiled into a database, used to inform the ECE faculty's deliberations and help them reach consensus on curriculum revisions. Contains 24 references. Appendixes provide addresses of DACUM-related organizations, instructions for completing the focus group questionnaire, and the synthesized DACUM chart. (HAA)

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ED 405 941

# Using Action Research to Inform Curriculum Deliberation in an Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Program

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**Abstract**

This action research project provided quantitative and qualitative data to assist faculty in curriculum deliberation for the purpose of reviewing and revising the early childhood teacher education curriculum at a community college. The data was collected using a modified DACUM and focus group interviews, analyzed, and compiled into a database. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) faculty used the data to focus on discrepancies between what was included in the ECE curriculum, what should be in the curriculum, and what actually occurred for graduates of the program. The action research project informed the reflection, analysis, deliberations, and consensus building regarding curriculum issues.

**Introduction**

An education action research project was conducted by the Early Childhood Education (ECE) faculty at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, to provide quantitative and qualitative data to assist faculty in deliberation for the purpose of reviewing and revising the curriculum. Three key elements were involved in this action research project: use of the DACUM approach of curriculum development for obtaining quantitative data; use of focus groups for acquiring qualitative data; and the use of a deliberative process of curriculum decision making. We begin this paper by describing action research in education, the DACUM approach to curriculum development, focus groups, and the deliberative method of curriculum decision making. In the second section of this paper we describe the methodology and findings of our action research project. In the final section we present a summary and our conclusions.

**Action Research**

Education action research is practitioner-based research fostering a reflective-deliberative plan of inquiry and action for understanding, improving, and enhancing the teaching and learning process and the curriculum (Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993). Teachers select issues or questions which have value to them and undertake a planned

inquiry. The intent of the action research is to obtain information to facilitate deliberation and reflection about the teaching-learning process, including the curriculum. The necessary steps to improve the curriculum can be undertaken based on careful analysis, reflection and deliberation (Grundy and Kemmis, 1984). Action research is flexible, open-ended, cyclic in nature, collaborative, considers human interactions, focuses on the practical, and involves a search for making positive changes in the curriculum, the teaching and learning process, and the classroom. (Elliott, 1991; McKernan, 1991; McNiff, 1993 and 1995; Stringer, 1996).

Action research "does not have the writing of research reports and other publications as a primary goal" (McKernan, 1991, p. 4). Instead it is a way of investigating a practical problem for a particular group. Action research can be used as a vehicle for exploring the practices which form the curriculum and for developing a plan of action for improving the curriculum (McKernan, 1991; Carr and Kemmis, 1983)

**DACUM**

DACUM, an acronym for **D**eveloping **A** **C**urricul**UM**, is a process used to analyze the tasks involved in an occupation (Norton, 1987; Nolan, 1990). The DACUM approach has been used by business, industry, and vocational education programs for more than twenty-five years. It is an effective method for determining the tasks that need to be performed by people in a particular occupation and for designing educational programs for that occupation (Nolan, 1990; O'Brien, 1989). DACUM is also used to review and revise existing programs. Vocational educational programs at colleges throughout the United States and Canada have used the DACUM process as a way of designing a new program and developing the curriculum for the program.

The DACUM process is based on three assumptions:

> (1) expert workers are better able to describe/define their job than anyone else, (2) any job can be effectively described in terms of the tasks that successful workers in that occupation perform, and (3) workers need certain specific attitudes and knowledge in order to perform each task correctly (Norton, 1987, 15).

Based on these assumptions, a group of 6 to 12 experts, people who have actually performed the tasks, are selected to carefully analyze the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform their jobs. A DACUM facilitator leads the group through a two day brainstorming process. The group identifies "general areas of responsibility, pinpoints specific tasks performed in connection with each duty, reviews and refines the task and duty statements, sequences them and identifies entry-level tasks" (Norton, 1987, 15). The group develops a DACUM chart, a graphic display of the tasks involved in the occupation (Brumbach, n. d.). In addition to the DACUM chart, the group usually describes the traits, characteristics, and attitudes needed by the workers as well as general knowledge and skills that are necessary to accomplish the tasks (Brumbach, n. d.; Norton, 1987; Nolan, 1990).

After a DACUM chart has been developed, the chart is verified or validated. A second group of experts are asked to review the chart and determine: (1) are the tasks entry level tasks, (2) how important are the tasks for this occupation, (3) how frequently are the tasks performed, and (4) should other tasks be included. If necessary the DACUM chart is revised and the information provided by both groups becomes the basis for developing and/or revising the curriculum for a vocational educational program.

A Modified DACUM is a shorter version of the process. The group begins with an existing task list and modifies and/or verifies the tasks on the list. The modified DACUM process can be accomplished in less than one day as compared to the two days required in the regular DACUM approach (Nolan, 1990).

**Focus Groups**

Focus group discussion/interview is a qualitative research technique for gathering inductive and naturalistic information (Krueger, 1988) . Each focus group usually consists of seven to ten carefully chosen individuals and is led by a skilled facilitator who uses a discussion guide, a summary statement of the issues to be addressed, to assist the group discussion (Krueger, 1988). A number of different groups are selected to provide multiple

perspectives. The focus group sessions usually last for several hours and are facilitated by someone not directly involved in the topic being discussed (Bonner, 1987).

A focus group discussion/interview is a "carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment" (p. 18). The information provided by focus groups consists of real-life data (Krueger, 1988). Focus groups can provide a relatively large amount of useful and useable information in a short period of time. Group discussions are audio-taped for later analysis. The facilitator carefully listens to the tapes and searches for "patterns among the words, phrases and thoughts of the respondents" (Advertising Research Foundation, p. 19).

Focus groups have been primarily used in marketing research, but recently they have been used to assist in program planning and curricular review at the college level (Hendershott and Wright, 1993; Griggs and Stewart, 1995).

**The Deliberative Method of Curriculum Decision Making**

McCutcheon (1995) describes deliberation as

> a process of reasoning about practical problems. ... [and] a decision-making process in which people...conceive a problem, create and weight likely alternative solutions to it, envision the probable results of each alternative, and select or develop the best course of action (p. 4).

She believes "deliberation is the central process of curriculum decision making" (p. 3). The deliberative method of curriculum decision making offers a way of developing practical, pragmatic solutions to curriculum issues and problems. This approach is based on the practical because "curriculum tasks are practical tasks: they present us with problems we can solve only by taking action" (Reid, 1978, p. 14). Deliberation is the means used to deal with the practical. Schwab (1978) states:

> deliberation is complex and arduous. It treats both ends and means and must treat them as mutually determining one another. It must try to identify, with respect to both, what facts may be relevant. It must try to ascertain the relevant facts in the concrete case. It must try to identify the desiderata [the commonplaces: learners, teachers, milieus, subject matter] in the case. It must generate alternative solutions. It must make every effort to trace the branching pathways of consequences which may flow from each alternative and affect desiderata. It must weigh alternatives and their costs and consequences against one another, and choose, not the *right* alternative, for there is no such thing, but the *best* one (pp. 318-319).

In a practical, deliberative method of curriculum development, there is a great deal of cycling between steps and critical reflection throughout the entire process. The deliberative method can be described as an expanding spiral rather than a linear procedure (Schwab, 1978).

An essential element in a practical, deliberative approach is to include information from the commonplaces: the teacher, the subject matter, the learner, and the milieu (Reid, 1992 and 1994; Schwab, 1978). "Someone (a *teacher*) aims to teach something (a *subject matter*) to someone (a *learner*) in a network of social and cultural environments (*milieux*). Every educational situation involves all four factors even if we sometimes forget to consider them all. To ignore any one of them constitutes a failure...." (Pereira, 1984, p. 354). Schwab (1978) believed group deliberation was essential to curriculum decision making because only groups can collect the data, analyze it, and provide the expertise needed to make judgments and reach consensus.

Reid (1978), in discussing a report by Walker, describes curriculum deliberation as structured and task relevant. Curriculum deliberation is only as effective as the data used "to state problems, to define the area within which solutions could be sought and to justify the arguments and judgments that guided choice between possible solutions" (p. 55).

"The aim of deliberative theory is to respect complexity" (Reid, 1992, p. 78). Eisner (1994) describes curriculum development as a "complex, fluid process" that is often "messy" and requires a great deal of "flexibility, ingenuity, and tolerance toward ambiguity" (p. 372). Deliberation offers a way of dealing with the complexity of curriculum review and development.

**The Practical Problem of Our Action Research Project**

The Early Childhood Education Program at Sinclair Community College began as a Head Start Supplementary Training (HSST) site. The HSST program became the core of the Early Childhood Education associate degree approved by the Ohio Board of Regents in 1971. At that time most of the students enrolled were working in child care centers. The

curriculum was developed to meet their specific requirements. Over the years portions of the curriculum were changed in response to perceived community needs. In 1987 the Ohio Department of Education established standards for a Pre-Kindergarten Associate Teacher Certification. Adjustments were made in the existing ECE curriculum to meet these standards. One standard requires the program to conduct a systematic review of the curriculum once every five years. The ECE program faculty decided to begin this review and met for a curriculum brainstorming session. Although Sinclair Community College's ECE program has a statewide reputation for excellence, the faculty believed some areas needed thoughtful attention. These areas included the needs of preservice students; content of specific courses; course prerequisites; curriculum sequencing; class assignments; course overlaps; and general education requirements. The faculty wanted to address these issues in a deliberative manner.

**Methodology**

Various aspects of curriculum development, curriculum review, and curriculum revision were investigated by the ECE faculty. Four methods evolved through the action research cycle for collecting and analyzing the data utilized in this study: DACUM; focus groups; creation of a data base; and a deliberative method of curriculum decision making.

The ECE faculty decided to utilize a modified DACUM approach to provide the basis for the curriculum revision. Eight validated DACUM charts/task lists for Early Childhood Education were obtained from two different DACUM sources (see Appendix A). These charts were from community and technical colleges in the United States and Canada and varied from institution to institution. The DACUM charts were reviewed by a group of ECE faculty members. Over 800 tasks from the charts were categorized under ten broad categories and the tasks under each category were reviewed and synthesized into a DACUM chart consisting of 133 tasks. Using a DACUM like format a survey questionnaire was developed to verify and validate the synthesized DACUM chart. Three distinct pieces of data were requested for each task: (1) is this a task an early childhood

education associate degree graduate should be able to perform; (2) how important is this task in the profession of early childhood education; (3) how frequently is the task performed. The final section of the questionnaire asked for any additional tasks that should be included. Appendix B explains the directions for completing the questionnaire.

The ECE faculty reviewed the proposed questionnaire, and a decision was made to use a research method that would give both quantitative and qualitative data. This could be accomplished by using a focus group process. Focus groups would serve as the population to verify and validate the synthesized DACUM chart and provide real-life data. It was important that members of the focus groups represent a broad professional base in the field of early childhood education to secure relevant information from the "commonplaces" (Schwab, 1978).

Four distinct focus groups were identified: (1) the ECE Program Advisory Committee; (2) ECE program graduates; (3) ECE student teaching site representatives; (4) representatives from community child care programs. Each focus group consisted of eight to ten participants. Seven ECE program faculty served as a test group to determine an approximate time frame for completing the questionnaire. While not a formal focus group, the completed faculty questionnaires were included in the final data reports. Faculty members were also instructed to select one or two key items in each category for the focus groups' discussion guide. A person trained in leading focus group discussions was selected.

In order to have an unbiased discussion, no one from the ECE program participated in or observed the focus group meetings. During the first hour of the focus group session, each participant completed the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected and the participants were given a duplicate questionnaire for discussion purposes. During the remaining two hours of the session, the focus group leader conducted a discussion which was recorded on chart paper and audio taped.

**Findings**

The DACUM questionnaire data was tabulated and analyzed using the subprograms from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version X. The focus group discussions were also reviewed and analyzed by the focus group leader. Comments from each group were carefully studied and general themes and patterns discussed in all four focus groups were identified through an analysis of the recorded charts and audio tapes. Notable differences between groups were also identified. The complete analysis was compiled into a report by the focus group leader and distributed to the ECE faculty. The amount of quantitative and qualitative data was overwhelming and the ECE faculty determined the information was not in a practical form for facilitating the deliberative process.

A data base of the analyzed quantitative data was created and reports generated to better inform the curriculum deliberations. The percentile rankings of tasks by importance and frequency and the general patterns of the focus groups were the most usable data. Table 1 shows the most important tasks ranked in the 90th percentile. Table 2 displays the most frequently performed tasks ranked in the 90th percentile. Table 3 shows the rank order of categories by level of importance. Table 4 shows the general themes and patterns of the focus groups' discussions. The reports of the quantitative data and analysis of the four focus groups provided a more practical vehicle to inform the curriculum deliberation.

**Table 1**
**The Most Important Tasks**
**(Those Ranked in the 90th Percentile)**

| Rank | Task | Importance Score |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exhibit self-control | 97.8 |
| 2. | Maintain confidentiality | 97.8 |
| 3. | Use a positive approach in communicating with families both positive and negative factors | 96.6 |
| 4. | Display warmth, empathy, and enthusiasm in working with children. | 95.6 |
| 5. | Report suspected child abuse | 95.6 |
| 6. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for language experiences | 95.6 |
| 7. | Cooperate with team members | 95.6 |
| 8. | Enforce safety guidelines for indoor/outdoor play | 95.6 |
| 9. | Set up and maintain a neat attractive, developmentally appropriate child-centered classroom | 95.5 |
| 10. | Model acceptable behavior | 95.4 |
| 11. | Administer first aid | 95.4 |
| 12. | Implement evacuation policies | 95.2 |
| 13. | Foster self-esteem and self-confidence | 93.4 |
| 14. | Accept responsibility | 93.4 |
| 15. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for creativity. | 93.4 |
| 16. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for gross motor development | 93.4 |
| 17. | Establish accepting environment | 93.4 |
| 18. | Use appropriate vocabulary | 93.3 |
| 19. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for fine motor development | 93.3 |

**Table 1 (Cont)**
**The Most Important Tasks**
**(Those Ranked in the 90th Percentile)**

| Rank | Task | Importance Score |
|---|---|---|
| 20. | Modulate voice appropriately to situation | 93.3 |
| 21. | Provide both child-centered and teacher facilitated activities | 93.3 |
| 22. | Follow policy for administering medical emergency procedures and medications | 93.3 |
| 23. | Develop and implement activities (lesson plans) | 93.3 |
| 24. | Provide real/manipulative activities | 93.3 |
| 25. | Demonstrate professional work habits | 93.2 |
| 26. | Provide opportunities for child to learn self-control | 93.2 |
| 27. | Comply with release procedures | 93.0 |
| 28. | Secure poisons and medications | 92.9 |
| 29. | Obtain and maintain first aid certification, communicable disease and child abuse training | 91.2 |
| 30. | Recognize the individual differences and/or special needs of children | 91.1 |
| 31. | Provide for developmentally appropriate opportunities for both quiet and active play | 91.1 |
| 32. | Encourage exploration and questions | 91.1 |
| 33. | Follow center's procedure and policies | 91.1 |
| 34. | Supervise toileting and hand washing | 90.9 |
| 35. | Establish fair and reasonable rules | 90.9 |
| 36. | Communicate effectively with family | 90.9 |
| 37. | Teach personal safety, personal hygiene skills, and healthy eating habits | 90.9 |

**Table 2**
**The Tasks Performed Most Frequently**
**(Those Ranked in the 90th Percentile)**

| Rank | Task | Frequency Score |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exhibit self-control | 97.7 |
| 2. | Model acceptable behavior | 97.7 |
| 3. | Use appropriate vocabulary | 95.5 |
| 4. | Enforce safety guidelines for indoor/outdoor play | 95.4 |
| 5. | Maintain confidentiality | 95.4 |
| 6. | Display warmth, empathy, and enthusiasm in working with children | 95.4 |
| 7. | Cooperate with team members | 95.3 |
| 8. | Modulate voice appropriately to situation | 93.2 |
| 9. | Foster self-esteem and self-confidence | 93.2 |
| 10. | Structure smooth transitions | 93.2 |
| 11. | Encourage exploration and questions | 93.2 |
| 12. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for language experiences | 92.9 |
| 13. | Provide real/manipulative activities | 90.9 |
| 14. | Provide for developmentally appropriate opportunities for both quiet and active play | 90.9 |
| 15. | Prepare materials and classroom activities | 90.9 |
| 16. | Accept responsibility | 90.7 |
| 17. | Follow center's procedure and policies | 90.7 |
| 18. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for creativity | 90.5 |
| 19. | Follow state guidelines licensing laws and rules | 90.5 |
| 20. | Demonstrate professional work habits | 90.5 |
| 21. | Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for fine motor development | 90.5 |

**Table 3**
**Rank Order Of Categories By**
**Level Of Importance**

(1=Minor Importance; 3=Extreme Importance)

| Category Name | Mean Response |
|---|---|
| Develop and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum | 2.82 |
| Use appropriate guidance techniques | 2.80 |
| Demonstrate professionalism in the child-care setting | 2.77 |
| Observe and assess child's behavior | 2.75 |
| Maintain children's health & safety | 2.74 |
| Utilize effective communication skills | 2.73 |
| Utilize space, materials and routines | 2.66 |
| Establish positive and productive relationships with child's family | 2.63 |
| Establish and maintain a child-centered environment | 2.43 |
| Use all available resources to ensure effective child care | 2.20 |

**Table 4**
**Focus Group Results**

The focus groups' comments were divided into eight categories. Listed with each category are the statements made by all four focus groups.

| Categories | Statements |
|---|---|
| Challenges in the Field | • Important to view one's self as a professional.<br>• College students need orientation to different philosophies |
| Skills and Knowledge Necessary in the Field | • Importance of observation in the classroom.<br>• Emphasize developmentally appropriate levels of behavior.<br>• Importance of documentation in the classroom.<br>• Need to know and understand state guidelines.<br>• Developing and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum is the most important set of tasks for an entry-level person to know.<br>• Important to be able to create child-centered environment.<br>• Need to know how to use "the gift of the moment" (teachable moment).<br>• Time management/stress management skills helpful. |
| Personal Attributes Ideal in the Field | • An attitude of professionalism and commitment.<br>Note: The following tasks were deemed important by all the focus groups except the ECE graduate group<br>• High self-esteem<br>• Maturity<br>• Able to make good judgments |
| The Future | • Need for computer skills will continue to grow.<br>• Public schools will be offering similar services in near future. This means increased demand for skilled workers and probable influx from elementary education into ECE.<br>• Teenage mothers will continue to increase in number.<br>• Special needs children more and more prevalent.<br>• Being able to speak a second language may become a plus in the near future. |
| Child/Family Interaction | • Substance abuse and child abuse more prevalent. Need to be able to identify and address issue.<br>• Dysfunctional families, single parents, changing family structures more prevalent. Need foundation to deal with these social issues. |

**Table 4 (Cont)**
**Focus Group Results**

| Categories | Statements |
|---|---|
| Communication | • Need to know how to communicate in parent/teacher conference. Need to be able to write parent notes, observation, etc.<br>Note: The following tasks were discussed by all the focus groups except the ECE graduate group.<br>• Nonverbal communication is important, especially understanding your own.<br>• Entry-level ECE workers generally have poor writing skills.<br>• Oral communication: need to be articulate and speak "standard" English.<br>• Need to know what information should be shared with other staff, and what should not. |
| Active Suggestions for Change | • Have student teachers participate in parent/teacher conferences.<br>• Need more information on resources.<br>• Stress integrating cultural situation into the curriculum.<br>• Video tape student teachers as a training tool and as example of the student teacher's work.<br>• Emphasize time management.<br>• Stress practical experiences.<br>• Provide more medical information on AIDS, crack, etc.<br>• Need to be able to deal with extreme behavior problems.<br>• Be able to take a leadership role regarding special needs children. |
| The Interviewing Process | • Build on the portfolio concept.<br>Notes: The following tasks were deemed important by all the focus groups except the ECE graduate group.<br>• Employers looking for:<br>• Articulate, grammatically correct, "standard English" speech patterns.<br>• Good writing skills.<br>• Good interactions with children.<br>• Demonstration of firm understanding of child development.<br>• Poised and self-assured.<br>• Able to work in a team.<br>• Able to demonstrate they can think through the educational process.<br>• Understand the "why" something happens.<br>• Employers don't want:<br>• "I love this job because I just love children" (a red flag). |

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The ECE faculty were ready to continue the cycle of the action research process by deliberating on the research data. During weekly meetings the faculty used the data to determine any discrepancies between what was included in the current ECE curriculum, what should be in the curriculum, and what actually occurred for graduates of the program. Validated DACUM tasks above the 70th percentile and each of the focus group categories were evaluated as to where they fit in the curriculum, a process involving intense deliberations. Additionally, the data assisted faculty in dealing with vested interests through analysis, reflection and enhanced perspectives. This resulted in a collaborative effort to reach consensus on the revision of the ECE curriculum.

Consensus requires exploring various conflicting viewpoints and possibilities, focusing them, and directing them towards a solution that all can accept (Moscovici & Doise 1994). A consensus decision is one that all members of a group have a part in shaping and that all find at least minimally acceptable as means of accomplishing some mutual goal (Phillips & Woods, 1984). A consensus cannot be reached by voting or negotiating. It must be arrived at by each and every member feeling comfortable with the outcome. At its best, group consensus reached through deliberation "offers welcome safeguard against potential biases, extremes, and the incomplete knowledge of each individual" (Phillips & Woods, 1984). If the deliberations have been fruitful and the group has reached agreement, consensus tends to promote a sense of community or unity, a feeling of goodwill, and fosters a commitment to implement the decisions made (Phillips & Woods, 1984).

Actions were taken to revise the entire ECE curriculum based on the consensus achieved through lengthy faculty deliberations. A number of courses were eliminated, new courses were created, and all remaining courses were revised. Blocks of courses were designated in a specific sequence to build upon students' knowledge and skills. This enabled the development of assessment instruments for field experiences and student teaching based upon the identified DACUM tasks.

A DACUM chart was created to reflect the tasks on which the curriculum was built. The categories were ranked by level of importance. The appropriate tasks in each category were also ranked by level of importance.

**Conclusion**

Action research can be used to inform the process of curriculum deliberation. Action research begins with the identification of a practical problem. The practitioners involved must determine and utilize the methods most useful to the particular situation. Action research is flexible, open-ended, and cyclical in nature. There is a focus on the practical and consideration of human interactions. The result of action research is action based on the best available data. The effectiveness of curriculum deliberation is assisted by the data used to inform the participants during the process. Action research and deliberation offer a way of dealing with the complexity of curriculum revision and development.

This action research project was conducted to provide quantitative and qualitative data to assist faculty in curriculum deliberation for the purpose of reviewing and revising the early childhood education curriculum at a community college. The project sought to determine Early Childhood Educators' perceptions of the tasks an ECE graduate should be able to perform for comparison with the existing curriculum The quantitative and qualitative data were used as the basis for deliberation, review, and revision of the ECE curriculum. The study informed faculty deliberations by providing usable data that assisted in the consideration of alternative solutions, development of curriculum integration, sequence, and continuity.

While the action research project, deliberations and actual implementation of the ECE program curriculum revisions involved a longer time than initially anticipated, faculty clearly felt the process was beneficial. The results were of value because consensus was reached by the faculty on the most appropriate curriculum for the program and a coherent and cohesive curriculum was developed that benefited the students.

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## Appendix A

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## Appendix B

### Directions for Completing the Early Childhood Education DACUM Questionnaire (ECE Task Survey)

Directions: This questionnaire lists tasks that an early childhood education teacher (preschool/day care) might be expected to perform. Please identify the importance, frequency of labor, and entry level requirements of each task.

Entry Level refers to person who has received an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education and is assuming a teaching position for the first time. Is this task something the entry level teacher should be able to do? Circle yes or no.

Importance: Use the following key to rate the importance of the task according to what the early childhood education teacher actually does on the job:

1 = Of minor importance; nice to know; need not perform
2 = Of moderate importance; should know how to perform
3 = Of extreme importance; must know how to perform
NA = Not applicable

Frequency: Use the following key to rate the frequency of the task according to how often the early childhood education teacher actually performs the task:

1 = This is never or rarely done
2 = This is usually or regularly done
3 = This is done daily or constantly

Additional Tasks: If there are any additional tasks that you think should be listed, please write them in the space provided.

Comments: If you have any additional comments, please write them in the space provided.

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# DACUM TASK ANALYSIS

## Early Childhood Education

## Revised May, 1993


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**Early Childhood Education**
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# The Early Childhood Educator performs as an entry level teacher working with 2 1/2 to 5 year old children.

| Student Outcomes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A Develop and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum** | Provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum | Provide child-centered and teacher facilitated activities | Develop and implement activities | Provide real/manipulative activitites | Provide opportunities for both quiet and active play | Encourage exploration and questions | Prepare materials and classroom activities | Adapt plans for different developmental levels | Capitalize on incidental learning activities | Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter | Identify developmental goals and objectives | Evaluate and revise lesson plans | Identify theme and integrate into daily activities | Develop and implement backup activities |
| **B Use appropriate guidance techniques** | Exhibit self control | Model acceptable behavior | Foster self-esteem | Establish an accepting environment | Provide opportunities to learn self-control | Establish fair and reasonable rules | Specify the rules | Adapt classroom management techniques | Confer with child concerning behavior | Establish consequences | Confer with parents | Evaluate effectiveness of techniques | Assist child to accept peers | Include children in ongoing evaluation of limits |
| **C Demonstrate professionalism in the child care setting** | Maintain confidentiality | Cooperate with team members | Display warmth, empathy and enthusiasm | Accept responsibility | Demonstrate professional work habits | Follow center's procedures and policies | Demonstrate flexibility and initiative | Communicate effectively with supervisor/staff | Maintain professional appearance | Schedule and use time effectively | Demonstarte creativity and imagination | Perform all assigned duties | Maintain records as required | Attend parent meetings |
| **D Observe and assess child's behavior** | Recognize the individual differences of children | Report special needs | Observe and document child's behavior | Informally assess the child's development and behaviors | Incorporate assessment results | Reassess child's development and behaviors | Review child's developmental history | Make recommendations to parents | | | | | | |
| **E Maintain children's health and safety** | Report suspected child abuse | Administer first aid | Implement evacuation policies | Administer medical emergency procedures & medication | Comply with release procedures | Secure poisons and medications | Maintain first aid certification, communicable disease & child abuse training | Supervise toileting and hand washing | Teach personal safety, hygiene skills, and healthy eating habits | Prevent the transmission of disease | Follow state licensing laws and rules | Develop safety guidelines | Perform daily health check | Communicate special needs to others |
| | Report equipment needing repair | Manage care of chronic conditions | Notify parents of illness and emergency | Provide emergency sick child care | Respond to children's individual dietary needs | Develop and maintain allergy records | Maintain first aid equipment | Establish a healthful nap time procedure | Identify health problems | Implement healthful food service | | | | |
| **F Utilize effective communication skills** | Use appropriate vocabulary | Modulate voice appropriately | Give clear and simple instructions | Use effective questioning techniques | Practice effective listening techniques | Elicit active response from children | Focus attention on children | Obtain child's attention | Vary communication techniques | Use and interpret nonverbal communication | Prepare written communications | Use effective telephone techniques | | |
| **G Establish positive & productive relationships with each child's family** | Use a positive approach communicating both positive & negative factors | Communicate effectively | Inform families of pertinent information | Maintain open communication | Establish rapport | Use appropriate vocabulary | Conduct parent/teacher conferences | Understand cultural background of family | Solicit family input | Facilitate child/family communication | Share family information with co-workers | Conduct parent orientation | Provide suggestions for home learning activities | Use families' skills in the classroom |
| **H Establish and maintain a developmentally appropriate environment in a child care center** | Enforce safety guidelines | Set up classroom | Structure smooth transitions | Prepare, organize and present materials | Perform safety checks | Provide materials | React to child's daily interest | Establish and maintain daily routines | Maintain child/staff ratio | Balance indoor/outdoor activities | Guide children into varied activities | Participate in activities | Maintain classroom environment | Introduce activities by demonstration |



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